



REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed January 30, 2002. Claims 1-39 were pending in the Application and stand rejected. Applicants amend Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16, 19, 20, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, and 32 and cancel Claims 3, 15, 27, 33, and 39 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejects Claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 20-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable U.S. Patent No. 6,035,280 issued to Christensen ("Christensen") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,233,564 issued to Schulze, Jr. ("Schulze"). However, neither *Christensen* nor *Schulze*, taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest all elements of Applicants' Claim 1 as amended, which recites:

A system for rebate processing, comprising:

a plurality of first devices associated with promotion sponsors, the first devices operable to communicate information describing promotions to a rebate processing center;

a plurality of second devices associated with consumers, the second devices operable to communicate information indicating purchases of products to the rebate processing center; and

the rebate processing center, comprising:

a first memory operable to store promotion information describing the promotions available for the purchases, the promotion information comprising, for each of the promotions, a promotion sponsor identifier indicating a selected one of the promotion sponsors, a promotion identifier, promotion requirements, and at least one disbursement option;

a second memory operable to store transaction information indicating the purchases of the products, the transaction information comprising, for each of the purchases, a consumer identifier, a rebate request status, and a promotion identifier matching to a selected one of the promotions; and

a processor operable to process rebate requests by associating the purchases with the promotions using the promotion identifiers and determining whether selected transaction information for the purchases satisfies the rebate requirements for the promotions, the processor further operable to provide rebate status updates to the consumers using the rebate request statuses and to generate promotion reports, a promotion report comprising selected promotion information for at least one of the promotions having a particular promotion sponsor identifier.

Also, Applicants' Claims 8 and 20, as each are amended, include limitations similar to those of Claim 1 that are not taught or suggested by the cited references. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to Claims 1, 8, and 20 and their respective dependent Claims.

The Examiner rejects Claims 2, 7, 14, 16, 26, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Christensen*, in view of *Schulze* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,893,080 issued to McGurl, et al. ("*McGurl*"). However, *McGurl* fails to introduce any of the elements of Applicants' independent claims that are not shown by *Christensen* or *Schulze*. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to Claims 2, 7, 14, 16, 26, and 28, which depend from independent claims shown above to be allowable.

The Examiner rejects Claim 3, 15, and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Christensen*, in view of *Schulze* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,002,313 issued to Salvatore ("*Salvatore*"). However, *Salvatore* fails to introduce any of the elements of Applicants' independent claims that are not shown by *Christensen* or *Schulze*. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to Claims 3, 15, and 27, which depend from independent claims shown above to be allowable.

The Examiner rejects Claim 5, 13, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Christensen*, in view of *Schulze* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,999,914 issued to Blinn, et al. ("*Blinn*"). However, *Blinn* fails to introduce any of the elements of Applicants' independent claims that are not shown by *Christensen* or *Schulze*. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to Claims 5, 13, and 25, which depend from independent claims shown above to be allowable.

The Examiner rejects Claim 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Christensen*, in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,950,173 issued to Perkowski ("*Perkowski*"). However, *Christensen* and *Perkowski* both fail to teach or suggest the ability to generate promotions having multiple options for receiving an authorized rebate, with at least two of the options having different cash values to a recipient. Moreover, *Christensen* and *Perkowski*, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all elements of Applicants' Claim 32 as amended, which recites:

A computer-based interface for facilitating rebate processing, the interface operable to:

display a plurality of fields for entry by a user to create a promotion for a product bearing a rebate;

receive promotion information for the promotion, the promotion information comprising a product identifier and a plurality of disbursement options for receiving an authorized rebate, at least one of the disbursement options having a cash value to a recipient different than another one of the disbursement options;

communicate promotion information to a remote rebate processing center; and

receive a status of the promotion based on purchases of the product, the status indicating a number of rebate requests for the promotion and a number of authorized rebates fulfilled for each of the disbursement options for the promotion.

Therefore, Applicants' respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to Claim 32.

The Examiner rejects Claim 33, 34-37 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Christensen*, in view of *Perkowski* and further in view of *McGurl*. However, *McGurl* fails to introduce any of the elements of Claim 32 that are not shown by *Christensen* or *Perkowski*. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to Claims 33 and 39, which depend from independent Claim 32, which is shown above to be allowable.

The Examiner rejects Claim 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Christensen*, in view of *Perkowski* and further in view of *Blinn*. However, *Blinn* fails to introduce any of the elements of Claim 32 that are not shown by *Christensen* or *Perkowski*. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to Claim 38, which depend from independent Claim 32, which is shown above to be allowable.



13

Conclusions

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending Claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference or an interview would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the undersigned attorney for Applicants stands ready to conduct such a conference at the convenience of the Examiner.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any other fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt M. Pankratz".

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Marked-Up Version of Specification and Claim Amendments

For the convenience of the Examiner, all claims have been presented whether or not an amendment has been made.

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1. (Amended) A system for rebate processing, comprising: Technology Center 2100
a plurality of first devices associated with promotion sponsors, the first devices operable to communicate information describing promotions to a rebate processing center;
a plurality of second devices associated with consumers, the second devices operable to communicate information indicating purchases of products to the rebate processing center; and

the rebate processing center, comprising:

a first memory operable to store promotion information describing the promotions available for the purchases, the promotion information comprising, for each of the promotions, a promotion sponsor identifier indicating a selected one of the promotion sponsors, a promotion identifier, promotion requirements, and at least one disbursement option;

a second memory operable to store transaction information indicating the purchases of the products, the transaction information comprising, for each of the purchases, a consumer identifier, a rebate request status, and a promotion identifier matching to a selected one of the promotions; and

a processor operable to process rebate requests by associating the purchases with the promotions using the promotion identifiers and determining whether selected transaction information for the purchases satisfies the rebate requirements for the promotions, the processor further operable to provide rebate status updates to the consumers using the rebate request statuses and to generate promotion reports, a promotion report comprising selected promotion information for at least one of the promotions having a particular promotion sponsor identifier.

2. **(Amended)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the promotion information comprises, for at least one of the promotions, a plurality of disbursement options for receiving an authorized rebate, at least one of the plurality of disbursement options having a cash value to a recipient different than another one of the plurality of disbursement options.

3. **(Canceled)**

4. The system of Claim 1, wherein the second devices are further operable to output a rebate request form in a format suitable for mailing.

5. **(Amended)** The system of Claim 1, wherein at least one first device is operable to receive one of the promotion reports, the received promotion report [a status of promotions] comprising a number of rebate requests and a breakage rate for each promotion associated with a promotion sponsor.

6. **(Amended)** The system of Claim 1, wherein at least one second device is operable to receive one of the rebate status updates from the rebate processing center, the received rebate status update indicating the rebate request status for [a status of] rebate requests submitted to the rebate processing center by a user of the second device.

7. The system of Claim 1, wherein at least one second device is operable to receive an authorization upon approval of a rebate request, the authorization having a plurality of selectable disbursement options.

8. (Amended) An apparatus for rebate processing, comprising:
a first memory operable to store promotion information describing a plurality of promotions, the promotion information comprising, for each of the promotions, a promotion sponsor identifier, a promotion identifier, promotion requirements, and at least one disbursement option;

a second memory operable to store transaction information indicating a plurality of product purchases, the transaction information comprising, for each of the purchases, a consumer identifier, a rebate request status, and a promotion identifier matching to a selected one of the promotions; and

a processor operable to process rebate requests by associating the product purchases with the promotions using the promotion identifiers and determining whether selected transaction information for the purchases satisfies the rebate requirements for the promotions, the processor further operable to provide rebate status updates to the consumers using the rebate request statuses and to generate promotion reports, a promotion report comprising selected promotion information for at least one of the promotions having a particular promotion sponsor identifier.

9. The apparatus of Claim 8, further comprising an interface operable:
to receive promotion information from a plurality of promotion sponsors describing the promotions;
to receive transaction information from a plurality of consumers indicating the product purchases.

10. The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein the interface is operable to receive information electronically using the Internet.

11. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the interface is operable to receive transaction information entered from a rebate request form mailed by a purchaser of a product.

12. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 8, further comprising an interface operable to communicate one of the promotion reports to [a status of promotions associated with] a promotion sponsor in response to a request from the promotion sponsor.

13. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 8, further comprising an interface operable to communicate one of the promotion reports to [a status of promotions associated with] a promotion sponsor, the communicated promotion report [status] comprising a number of rebate requests and a breakage rate for each promotion associated with the promotion sponsor.

14. The apparatus of Claim 8, further comprising an interface to communicate an authorization to a consumer upon approving a rebate request, the authorization having a plurality of selectable disbursement options.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein at least one promotion comprises[:

a product identifier; and]

a plurality of disbursement options for receiving an authorized rebate, at least one of the plurality of disbursement options having a cash value to a recipient different than another one of the plurality of disbursement options.

17. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein the disbursement options comprise a cash rebate and a credit voucher.

18. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein at least one promotion comprises:
a product identifier;
an end date for the promotion; and
a geographic target for the promotion.

19. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein at least one transaction comprises:

[a promotion identifier;]

personal information of the purchaser of the product; and
purchase information.

20. (Amended) A method for rebate processing, comprising:

storing promotion information describing a plurality of promotions, the promotion information comprising, for each of the promotions, a promotion sponsor identifier, a promotion identifier, promotion requirements, and at least one disbursement option;

storing transaction information indicating a plurality of product purchases, the transaction information comprising, for each of the purchases, a consumer identifier indicating one of the consumers and a promotion identifier matching to a selected one of the promotions; [and]

processing rebate requests by associating the product purchases with the promotions using the promotion identifiers, wherein processing a rebate request for a selected one of the purchases comprises determining whether transaction information for the selected purchase satisfies the rebate requirements for the promotion indicated by the promotion identifier for the selected purchase;

providing rebate status updates to the consumers using the rebate request statuses; and

generate promotion reports, a promotion report comprising selected promotion information for at least one of the promotions having a particular promotion sponsor identifier.

21. The method of Claim 20, further comprising:

receiving, from a plurality of promotion sponsors, promotion information describing the promotions; and

receiving, from a plurality of consumers, transaction information indicating the product purchases.

22. The method of Claim 21, wherein the steps of receiving are performed electronically using the Internet.

23. The method of Claim 21, further comprising the step of receiving transaction information entered from a rebate request form mailed by a purchaser of a product.

24. **(Amended)** The method of Claim 21, further comprising:
receiving a request from a promotion sponsor for a status of promotions associated with the promotion sponsor;
determining a promotion sponsor identifier for the promotion sponsor;
generating a promotion report for at least one of the promotions associated with the determined promotion sponsor identifier; and
communicating the generated promotion report to [status of promotions associated with] the promotion sponsor.

25. **(Amended)** The method of Claim 24, wherein the generated promotion report [status of promotions] comprises a number of rebate requests and a breakage rate for each promotion associated with the promotion sponsor.

26. The method of Claim 20, further comprising:
approving a rebate request;
communicating an authorization to a consumer upon approving the rebate request, the authorization having a plurality of disbursement options; and
receiving a selection of the disbursement options.

27. **(Canceled)**

28. **(Amended)** The method of Claim 20, wherein at least one promotion comprises[:]

a product identifier; and]

a plurality of disbursement options for receiving an authorized rebate, at least one of the plurality of disbursement options having a cash value to a recipient different than another one of the plurality of disbursement options.

29. **(Amended)** The method of Claim 28, wherein the disbursement options comprise a cash rebate and a credit voucher.

30. The method of Claim 20, wherein at least one promotion comprises:

a product identifier;

an end date for the promotion; and

a geographic target for the promotion.

31. **(Amended)** The method of Claim 20, wherein at least one transaction comprises:

[a promotion identifier;]

personal information of the purchaser of the product; and

purchase information.

32. (Amended) A computer-based interface for facilitating rebate processing, the interface operable to:

display a plurality of fields for entry by a user to create a promotion for a product bearing a rebate;

receive promotion information for the promotion, the promotion information comprising a product identifier and a plurality of disbursement options for receiving an authorized rebate, at least one of the disbursement options having a cash value to a recipient different than another one of the disbursement options;

communicate promotion information to a remote rebate processing center; and

receive a status of the promotion based on purchases of the product, the status indicating a number of rebate requests for the promotion and a number of authorized rebates fulfilled for each of the disbursement options for the promotion.

33. (Cancelled)

34. The computer-based interface of Claim 33, wherein the disbursement options comprise a cash rebate and a credit voucher.

35. The computer-based interface of Claim 32, wherein promotion information comprises:

a product identifier;

an end date for the promotion; and

a geographic target for the promotion.

36. The computer-based interface of Claim 32, wherein the interface is operable to receive and communicate promotion information repeatedly to create a plurality of promotions for the remote rebate processing center.

37. The computer-based interface of Claim 32, wherein the interface is web-based and is further operable to communicate promotion information and receive a status of the promotion electronically using the Internet.

38. The computer-based interface of Claim 32, wherein the status of the promotion comprises:

- a number of rebate requests; and
- a breakage rate.

39. **(Canceled)**